



PUT SAFETY FIRST WHEN CELEBRATING WITH FIREWORKS THIS FOURTH OF JULY



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MADISON – America's birthday celebration involves parades, backyard barbecues and, of course, fireworks. State officials encourage everyone to enjoy fireworks in a safe and responsible manner.

"Fireworks are fun, but they can be very dangerous if used incorrectly," said Dr. Henry Anderson, State Health Officer. "Each year, there are many serious injuries such as burns, vision and hearing loss. These injuries are easily preventable by proper and safe use of fireworks."

In 2009, 11 Wisconsin residents were hospitalized and 69 made emergency department visits because of fireworks-related injuries.

"Children are especially vulnerable to these injuries," said Sandy Chalmers, Administrator of the state Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. "Never give fireworks – even sparklers – to young children. Sparklers can burn at temperatures up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That is hot enough to cause third-degree burns."

Wisconsin law regulates the use of fireworks. Fireworks such as roman candles, firecrackers, bottle rockets, mortars – anything that explodes or leaves the ground – can only be purchased and used with a permit issued by your local government.

Non-explosive devices such as sparklers and cones do not require a permit, but that does not mean they can be used safely by children. A U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission report shows children are more likely to be injured by fireworks during the month surrounding the Fourth of July. Nearly half of the victims are under age 15.

When using fireworks, state officials urge people to follow these important safety tips:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- A responsible adult should closely supervise all fireworks activities.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Light one item at a time, and then move back quickly.

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- Never carry fireworks in a pocket or shoot them in metal or glass containers.
- Keep a bucket of water or a hose handy in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Most importantly, if fireworks fizzle and don't go off, douse them with water and do not relight them.

“The safest way to prevent fireworks-related injuries is to leave fireworks displays to trained professionals,” Anderson said.

For more information on fireworks safety, visit:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Fireworks.htm>

For information on the legal use of fireworks, visit:

<http://www.doj.state.wi.us/site/fireworks.asp>

For consumer information, visit the Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection's website at

datcp.wisconsin.gov; via e-mail at datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov; or call toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

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